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H – 3160

International Court of Justice

H3160 - 0002

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 21 July 1948

I certify that Document Number 3166-PS was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number USA-593 in the Trial by the International Military Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

H3160 - 0003

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document 3266-PS No. USA - 543 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the United States Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the National Archives, Washington D.C. .

Nuremberg, 1 July 1948

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military
Tribunal

SEGRETERIA DI STATO
DI SVA SANTITA

THE VATICAN, November 13th 1945.

I, D o m e n i c o T a r d i n i, Secretary of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, hereby certify that the attached document, consisting of eight printed pages, and entitled:

"Religious Assistance for the Polish Catholic Workers in Germany - Part II (December 7th 1942)" (pp.19-26)

is a true and correct translation into the English language from the Latin language of a carbon copy of a document now in the possession of the Secretariate of State of His Holiness.

Domenico Tardini

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NUERNBERG, GERMANY
USA Exhibit 573
Filed Jan 8, 1946

H3160 - 0004

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II

PRESIDENT
OF THE BISHOPS' MEETINGS
AT FULDA

Breslau, December 7th 1942

Your Eminence,

On November 30th. I received your Eminence's esteemed Rescript of November 18th (N° 8111) about the very serious grievances which show clearly the dangers which threaten the Catholic position in Germany in our day. Not only has grave harm been done in the past few years to the liberty of the Church and its Institutions and rights, and to the integrity of its temporal goods, but openly and insidiously the faith itself and the free practice of the Catholic religion have been attacked. About some of the gravest injuries inflicted on the Church I not only protested on each occasion as the individual incident occurred, but, I also made a most formal protest about them *in globo* in a document which, as spokesman of all the Hierarchy, I sent to the supreme Ruler of the State and to the Ministries of the Reich on December 10th, 1941. Not a word by way of answer has been sent to us.

Your Eminence knows very well the greatest difficulty in the way of opening negotiations comes from the overruling authority which the "National Socialist Party Chancery" (Kanzlei der nazional-sozialistischen Partei, known as the Partei-Kanzlei) exercises in relation to the Chancery of the Reich (Reichskanzlei) and to the single Reich Ministries. This "Parteikanzlei" directs the course to be followed by the State, whereas the Ministries and the Chancery of the Reich are obliged and compelled to adjust their decrees to these directions. Besides, there is the

H3160 – 0005

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fact that the "Supreme Office for the Security of the Reich" called the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt" enjoys an authority which precludes all legal action and all appeals. Under it are the "Secret Offices for Public Security" called "Geheime Staatspolizei" (a title shortened usually to Gestapo) of which there is one for each Province. Against the decrees of this Central Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt) and of the Secret Offices (Geheime Staatspolizei) there is no appeal through the Courts, and no complaint made to the Ministries has any effect. Not infrequently the Councillors of the Ministries suggest that they have not been able to do as they would wish to, because of the opposition of these Party offices. As far as the executive power is concerned, the organisation called the SS, that is is Schutzstaffeln der Partei, is in practice supreme.

This hastily sketched interrelation of authorities is the reason why many of the petitions and protests made by the Bishops to the Ministries have been foiled. Even if we present our complaints to the so-called Supreme Security Office, there is rarely any reply; and when there is, it is negative.

On a number of very grave and fundamental issues we have also presented our complaints to the Supreme Leader of the Reich (Führer). Either no answer is given, or it is apparently edited by the above-mentioned Party Chancery, which does not consider itself bound by the Concordat made with the Holy See.

Having said this much by way of general introduction, I may note that the vigilance and open methods of all the German Hierarchy are proved by the reports which the individual Bishops and I, as President for the time being of the Bishops' Meetings at Fulda, have very frequently presented to His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio at Berlin, and by the Protocol of the Fulda Meetings. Every action that we have to take is bristling with difficulties, and fraught with very intense anxiety of conscience, and even in a sense with anguish; for while on the one hand we have to defend most tenaciously the fundamentals of the Faith and the rights of the Church, we cannot, on the other hand, over-

H3160 – 0006

3266-PS

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look the question, what in view of present circumstances is the more opportune course to take in relation to the Ministerial "constellation", and the public opinion. We have not neglected to maintain constant contact with His Excellensy the Apostolic Nuncio at Berlin.

To come to those grievances, which are enumerated in your Eminence's kind letter of November 18th, it is evident that the decrees contained in the edict of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs of September 2nd of this year constitute a serious blow to the rights and duties of the Catholic Church in regard to the care of souls and sacred liturgy, as well as to the right of every single Catholic Polish worker transferred to Germany for various works, of practising freely the Catholic religion. The individual sections of this Decree did not emanate from the original intention of the Ministry in question, but are, as is obvious from a consideration of the evolution of the documents as time went on, the interpolations of the Party Offices spoken of above.

To mention some of the most obnoxious documents, it is first of all

1

greatly to be deplored that all priests are forbidden to instruct the children of Polish workers in the Catholic religion. On December 31st 1941, I petitioned the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs in the name of all the Bishops of Germany that we might not be forbidden to prepare these children between the ages of eight and twelve years for their first Confession and Holy Communion. But such preparation of the children has been strictly forbidden.

2

On August 17th 1941, I sent a solemn protest to the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs against the Edict of the Governor of Upper Silesia dated June 24th 1941, and of other Government offices, by which it was most strictly forbidden for German priests

H3160 – 0007

3266-PS

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under pain of being sent to a concentration camp, to extend their care of souls to Poles.

3

There is the further grievance that we may not give to Poles any religious printed matter by way of instruction. For the use of Polish workers in the Archdiocese of Breslau a booklet of prayers and hymns was published in Polish under the title "Droga do Nieba" (The Way to Heaven). This booklet was officially passed by the Supreme Command of the German Army and 120,000 copies were distributed, with very good results, all over Germany. But on July 15th 1941, the use and the distribution of this booklet were forbidden.

4

In regard to the care of the souls of Polish workers, the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs gave the following permissions on June 13th 1940:

a) that on Sunday and feast days Poles might be present at liturgical service, but on condition that the Poles should assist at a Mass said for them only, apart from the parishioners,—or, in case of local necessity, they might even assist at the parish Mass, but gathered in a distinct section of the church benches;

b) that in case of necessity, Bishops may send specially chosen priests to undertake spiritual ministry among the Poles; they may visit suitable places to celebrate the Divine Service for the Poles at convenient hours.

But all these concessions were revoked on July 15th 1941.

Your Eminence is aware that, by Edict of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs of September 2nd 1942 a most stringent prohibition on liturgical service for Poles has been imposed, so that they may be present at Mass only once a month, and all use of the Polish tongue is abolished.

H3160 – 0008

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5

For some years past from the Breslau Curia we have published each month the text of a short discourse, which might be used for the sermon at the Sunday Mass. The text was printed in German, Polish and French, and was freely used in various dioceses of Germany. Now the use of these sermons is forbidden because the Polish language may not be spoken.

6

Then there is this most deplorable of all grievances for individual souls, that one may not allow them to come singly to make oral confession of their sins in order to receive the sacrament of Penance. To give an example, an excellent parish priest of my diocese has incurred the penalty of being sent to a concentration camp for not having repulsed, while hearing Confessions in the parish church, a Polish workman who had taken his place in the line, and came into the confessional. Now we are allowed to have a general Confession and general absolution only once a month, a practice which neither secures peace of soul nor certainty as to the validity of the absolution by reason of the lack of proper dispositions.

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When one considere all this, one does not wonder that the religious fervour of the Poles is suffering greatly, and that their moral integrity is exposed to great dangers. There is, moreover, the difficulty of contracting valid marriages, since German priests may not assist at Polish weddings. If, on the other hand, the engaged couples are advised to celebrate Matrimony without the assistance of a priest after the manner permitted by Canon 1098 of the Code of Canon Law, there is not sufficient provision for their peace of soul, nor for the certainty of the registration in the parish books.

This is an outline of the most urgent grievances.

H3160 – 0009

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I have never omitted to send formal protests againsts the intolerable decrees mentioned here to the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, setting forth the reasons why each of the edicts is not only insupportable, but even harmful and ruinous to the common good of the whole nation. Along with me each of the other members of the Hierarchy, in whose dioceses these edicts were more odiously enforced, asked separately for a remedy. And in each case His Excellency Bishop Wienken, who lives in Berlin and has been deputed by the Fulda meetings to deal with the Ministries, supported our petitions and the reasons for them in a personal interview. But all was in vain. The reason is the intense aversion of the Party to the Poles and the distrust, born of fear that through secret Polish agitation too many difficulties may arise for the security of the present State. The Poles have the deep-set hope and enthusiastic expectation that the Polish Realm will be restored and rise again. Hence they are all, without exception, taken by the German Government for enemies of the present German State. And German priests who out of a sense of duty and charity must denounce all injustice and dispense to every Christian without making national discriminations, the treasures of Christian doctrine, and must work to the best of their ability for the salvation of all souls, are looked upon, in consequence of this all-embracing charity of theirs—even though it is exercised for exclusively supernatural ends—with the greatest mistrust as if they were unlawfully in favour of the enemies of the present State, and their political aims. Accordingly all our petitions and statements are suspect and are scarcely listened to. Hence arises the unhappy state of affairs which no one can remedy.

About the Concentration Camps

We have been able, up to the moment, to learn little, because we know scarcely anything of the reason why the individuals are sent there, of the treatment they receive, of their fate, their health or their needs. Those who are put into the camps are compelled

H3160 – 0010

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by threat of the severest penalties to maintain the strictest silence about all that happens in the camps; as a result they dare not say anything. All the bishops feel the deepest sympathy and a keen sense of pity for those in concentration camps, especially as we are persuaded that the great majority of those held there are innocent. Many of the clergy of my diocese have died there—men whom I held in special esteem and love for their upright life and conduct, known to the whole people.

His Excellency Bishop Wienken, of whom I spoke above, deals continually, at the instance of the Bishops ordinary, with the Councillors of the above mentioned Reichssicherheitshauptamt office, whenever there is question of taking special care of an individual internee.

At the request of the priests held in Dachau, I sent them on February 25th 1941 one hundred and twenty Roman Breviaries, and on June 27th 1942 a number of Mass vestments and a large Ciborium for Holy Communion.

On July 2nd 1938, December 4th 1940 and June 3rd 1942 I made an urgent appeal to the authorities of the concentration camps that the celebration of Mass should be allowed in other camps as in Dachau, and that spiritual ministry should be allowed, especially among the sick and the dying. I also presented a petition that the bodies of those who die should not be indiscriminately burned, but should be given due burial whenever they had asked for it. This petition was rejected.

On the number of priests detained in Dachau and the number of those who have died there I have begun a statistical report for all the dioceses of Germany to cover the years 1940, 1941, 1942. I was not able to extend these lists (which include also those killed in the war) to the Polish dioceses, because it is impossible to get exact figures from Posnan-Gnesno and other Polish dioceses. The Very Reverend diocesan administrators could scarcely say how many of the priests absent from home are in various concentration camps, in Dachau and elsewhere; how many have been

H3160 – 0011

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exiled to other regions; how many are dead. If I were to ask them myself I doubt if they could give a reliable answer.

For the rest, I shall consult with Bishop Wienken, so that he may have certain information on the questions which your Eminence raised.

It is not however to be hoped that the Government or the Party will allow the emigration of priests interned in the concentration camps. For on account of the mistrust of which I spoke there is no doubt of their fear, that the priests emigrating to foreign parts would spread reports extremely unpleasant for the Government and the Party.

With all reverence and humility, I remain
Your Eminence's obedient servant

A. Card. Bertram Archbishop of Breslau.

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II

PRESIDENT
OF THE BISHOPS' MEETINGS
AT FULDA

Breslau, December 7th 1942.

Your Eminence,

On November 30th, I received your Eminence's esteemed Rescript of November 18th (No.8111) about the very serious grievances which show clearly the dangers which threaten the Catholic position in Germany in our day. Not only has grave harm been done in the past few years to the liberty of the Church and its Institutions and rights, and to the integrity of its temporal goods, but openly and insidiously the faith itself and the free practice of the Catholic religion have been attacked. About some of the gravest injuries inflicted on the Church I not only protested on each occasion as the individual incident occurred, but, I also made a most formal protest about them in globo in a document which, as spokesman of all the Hierarchy, I sent to the supreme Ruler of the State and to the Ministries of the Reich on December 10th, 1941. Not a word by way of answer has been sent to us.

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Having said this much by way of general introduction, I may note that the vigilance and open methods of all the German Hierarchy are proved by the reports which the individual Bishops and I, as President for the time being of the Bishops' Meetings at Fulda, have very frequently presented to His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio at Berlin, and by the Protocol of the Fulda Meetings. Every action that we have to take is bristling with difficulties and fraught with very intense anxiety of conscience, and even in a sense with anguish; for while on the one hand we have to defend most tenaciously the

H3160 - 0013

the fundamentals of the Faith and the rights of the Church, we cannot, on the other hand, overlook the question, what in view of present circumstances is the more opportune course to take in relation to the Ministerial "constellation", and the public opinion. We have not neglected to maintain constant contact with His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio at Berlin.

To come to those grievances, which are enumerated in your Eminence's kind letter of November 18th, it is evident that the decrees contained in the edict of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs of September 2nd of this year constitute a serious blow to the rights and duties of the Catholic Church in regard to the care of souls and sacred liturgy, as well as to the right of every single Catholic Polish worker transferred to Germany for various works, of practising freely the Catholic religion. The individual sections of this Decree did not emanate from the original intention of the Ministry in question, but are, as is obvious from a consideration of the evolution of the documents as time went on, the interpolations of the Party Offices spoken of above.

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On August 17th 1941, I sent a solemn protest to the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs against the Edict of the Governor of Upper Silesia dated June 24th, 1941, and of other Government offices, by which it was most strictly forbidden for German priests under pain of being sent to a concentration camp, to extend their care of souls to Poles.

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There is the further grievance that we may not give to Poles any religious printed matter by way of instruction. For the use of Polish workers in the Archdiocese of Breslau a booklet of prayers and hymns was published in Polish under the title "Droga do Nieba" (The Way to Heaven). This booklet was officially passed by the Supreme Command of the German Army and 120,000 copies were distributed, with very good results, all over Germany. But on July 15th 1941, the use and the distribution of this booklet were forbidden.

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b) that in case of necessity, Bishops may send specially chosen priests to undertake spiritual ministry among the Poles: they may visit suitable places to celebrate the Divine Service for the Poles at convenient hours.

H3160 - 0014

But all these concessions were revoked on July 15th 1941.

Your Eminence is aware that, by Edict of the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs of September 2nd 1942 a most stringent prohibition on liturgical service for Poles has been imposed, so that they may be present at Mass only once a month, and all use of the Polish tongue is abolished.

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For some years past from the Breslau Curia we have published each month the text of a short discourse, which might be used for the sermon at the Sunday Mass. The text was printed in German, Polish and French, and was freely used in various dioceses of Germany. Now the use of these sermons is forbidden because the Polish language may not be spoken.

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Then there is this most deplorable of all grievances for individual souls, that one may not allow them to come singly to make oral confession of their sins in order to receive the sacrament of Penance. To give an example, an excellent parish priest of my diocese has incurred the penalty of being sent to a concentration camp for not having repulsed, while hearing Confessions in the parish church, a Polish workman who had taken his place in the line, and came into the confessional. Now we are allowed to have a general Confession and general absolution only once a month, a practice which neither secures peace of soul nor certainty as to the validity of the absolution by reason of the lack of proper dispositions.

7

When one considers all this, one does not wonder that the religious fervour of the Poles is suffering greatly, and that their moral integrity is exposed to great dangers. There is, moreover, the difficulty of contracting valid marriages, since German priests may not assist at Polish weddings. If, on the other hand, the engaged couples are advised to celebrate Matrimony without the assistance of a priest after the manner permitted by Canon 1098 of the Code of Canon Law, there is not sufficient provision for their peace of soul, nor for the certainty of the registration in the parish books.

This is an outline of the most urgent grievances.

I have never omitted to send formal protests against the intolerable decrees mentioned here to the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, setting forth the reasons why each of the edicts is not only insupportable, but even harmful and ruinous to the common good of the whole nation. Along with me each of the other members of the Hierarchy, in whose dioceses these edicts were more odiously enforced, asked separately for a remedy. And in each case His Excellency Bishop Wienken, who lives in Berlin and has been deputed by the Fulda meetings to deal with the Ministries, supported our petitions and the reasons for them in a personal interview. But all was in vain. The reason is the intense aversion of the Party to the Poles and the distrust, born of fear that through secret Polish agitation too many difficulties may arise for the security of the present State. The Poles have the deep-set hope and enthusiastic expectation that the Polish Realm will be restored and rise again. Hence they are all, without exception, taken by the German Government for enemies of the present German State. And German priests who out of a sense of duty and charity must denounce all injustice and dispense to every Christian without making national discriminations, the treasures of Christian doctrine, and must work to the best of their ability for the salvation of all souls, are looked upon, in consequence of this all-embracing charity of theirs--even though it is exercised for exclusively supernatural ends--with the greatest mistrust as if they were unlawfully in favour of the enemies of the present State, and their political aims. Accordingly all our petitions and statements are suspect

H3160 - 0015

and are scarcely listened to. Hence arises the unhappy state of affairs which no one can remedy.

About the Concentration Camps

We have been able, up to the moment, to learn little, because we know scarcely anything of the reason why the individuals are sent there, of the treatment they receive, of their fate, their health or their needs. Those who are put into the camps are compelled by threat of the severest penalties to maintain the strictest silence about all that happens in the camps; as a result they dare not say anything. All the bishops feel the deepest sympathy and a keen sense of pity for those in concentration camps, especially as we are persuaded that the great majority of those held there are innocent. Many of the clergy of my diocese have died there—men whom I held in special esteem and love for their upright life and conduct, known to the whole people.

His Excellency, Bishop Wienken, of whom I spoke above, deals continually, at the instance of the Bishops ordinary, with the Councillors of the above mentioned Reichssicherheitshauptamt office, whenever there is question of taking special care of an individual internee.

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For the rest, I shall consult with Bishop Wienken, so that he may have certain information on the questions which your Eminence raised.

It is not however to be hoped that the Government or the Party will allow the emigration of priests interned in the concentration camps. For on account of the mistrust of which I spoke there is no doubt of their fear, that the priests emigrating to foreign parts would spread reports extremely unpleasant for the Government and the Party.

With all reverence and humility, I remain

Your Eminence's obedient servant

A. Card. Bertram Archbishop of Breslau.

H3160 - 0016

Translation of Document No. 3266-PS
Office of U.S. Chief of Counsel

(19) ing

Der Praesident
der Bischofs Konferenz in Fulda

Breslau, 7ter Dezember 1942

Eminenz:-

Ich erhielt am 30. November das geschaetzte Schreiben Eurer Eminenz datiert 18. November (No.8111) bezueglich schwerer Misstaende, die klar anzeigen von welchen Gefahren die katholische Stellung in Deutschland heute bedroht ist. Nicht nur sind der Kirche, ihren Institutionen und ihren Rechten, Leid in Bezug auf ihre Freiheit zugefuegt worden, sowie im Bezug auf die Intergritaet ihres irdischen Eigentums; sondern auch der Glaube selbst und die freie Ausuebung der katholischen Religion wurde oeffentlich und in gehaessiger Weise angegriffen. Bezueglich der schwersten Uebergriffe gegen die Kirche habe ich nicht nur protestiert im Anschluss an jedes einzelne Vorkommnis, sondern habe auch einen formellen Protest in globo (zusammenfassend) gemacht, und dieses Dokument als Vertreter der Hierarchie an das Staatsoberhaupt und die Ministerien des Reiches am 10. Dezember 1941 gesandt. Keinerlei Antwort ist uns diesbezueglich zugestellt worden.

Eure Eminenz sind sich der grossen Schwierigkeiten bewusst, die der Eroeffnung von Unterhandlungen im Wege stehen, auf Grund der Stellung, die die Kanzlei der national-sozialistischen Partei, genannt Partei-Kanzlei, heute einnimmt, in ihrer Stellung zur Reichskanzlei und den einzelnen Reichsministerien. Die Parteikanzlei bedingt die Staatsrichtung, und die Ministerien und Kanzlei des Reiches sind gezwungen, sich auf ihre Erlasse in dieser Hinsicht einzustellen. Weiterhin hat das Reichssicherheitshauptamt Befugnisse, welche jeglichen Rechtsweg und Berufung ausschliessen. Unter ihm sind die Geheim-Bureaus fuer oeffentliche Sicherheit organisiert (Gestapo), je ein Bureau fuer jede Provinz. Gegen die Befehle des Zentral-Bureaus (Reichsicherheitshauptamt) und die Geheim Bureaus (Geheime Staatspolizei) gibt es keinerlei Berufung durch Gerichtshoefe, noch haben Beschwerden durch die Ministerien irgendeinen Einfluss. Die Raete der verschiedenen Ministerien geben haeufig als Grund, dass sie ihren eigenen Wuenschen nicht folgen konnten, die Opposition dieser Partei Organisationen an. Als ausuebende Gewalt sind die Schutzstaffeln der Partei (SS) allein ausschlaggebend.

Diese schnell umrissene, innere Verbindung der Behoerden ist der Grund, warum so viele Petitionen und Proteste die von Seite der Bischoefe an die Ministerien ergingen, erfolglos geblieben sind. Selbst wenn wir unsere Beschwerden an das Reichssicherheitshauptamt richten, erhalten wir selten eine Antwort; und wenn eine solche erhalten wird, ist der Bescheid immer ein negativer.

Bezueglich einer Anzahl ausserordentlich schwerer und fundamentaler Massnahmen haben wir unsere Beschwerden direkt an das Reichsoberhaupt gerichtet (Fuehrer). Entweder erhalten wir keinerlei Bescheid, oder ist derselbe offensichtlich von der oben-erwaehnten Partei Kanzlei abgefasst, die sich nicht an das Konkordat mit den Vatikan (Heiligen Stuhl) gebunden fuehlt.

Nach Erwaehnung des Obigen als generelle Einleitung, wuensche ich zu bemerken, dass die Wachsamkeit und offenen Methoden der gesamten deutschen Hierarchie, durch die Berichte bewiesen sind, die von den einzelnen Bischoefen und mir als augenblicklichem Praesidenten der Bischofs-Konferenz, an Seine Exellenz den Apostolischen Nunzio in Berlin ergingen, und durch die Protokolle der Fulda Konferenz. Jeder Schritt, den wir unternehmen muessen ist voll von Schwierigkeiten, Gewissensbissen und Seelenschmerz, denn waehrendwir einerseits aufs strengste die Fundamente des Glaubens und die Rechte der Kirche verteidigen muessen, koennen wir anderer-

H3160 - 0017

seits die Frage nicht uebersehen, welches, im Hinblick auf die augenblicklichen Umstaende, und in Anbetracht der ministeriellen Konstellation und der oeffentlichen Meinung der geeignetste Richtweg sei. Wir vergassen nicht in regelmaessigen Kontakt mit Seiner Exellenz dem Apostolischen Nunzius in Berlin zu bleiben.

Um auf die Misstaende zurueckzukommen, die in dem freundlichen Briefe Ihrer Eminenz vom 18. November erwaehnt waren, so ist es offensichtlich, dass die Bestimmungen, enthalten im Erlass des Ministeriums fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten vom 2ten September dieses Jahres, einen schweren Eingriff in die Rechte und Pflichten der katholischen Kirche in Bezug auf die Seelsorge und der heiligen Lithurgie darstellen, so wie auch das Recht eines jeglichen katholischen Arbeiters aus Polen beschraenkt war, der zu Arbeiten nach Deutschland verschickt wurde, sein katholisches Glaubensbekenntnis frei auszuueben. Die verschiedenen Sektionen des Erlasses waren nicht die urspruenglichen Absichten des in Frage sthenden Ministeriums, sondern sind, wie offensichtlich aus der Entwicklung der Dokumente im Laufe der Zeit hervorgeht, Einschaltungen der obenerwaehnten Partei Bureaus.

Um einige der anstoessigsten Dokumente zu erwaehnen ist vor allem

1

es aufs hoechste zu bedauern, dass es allen Priestern verboten war die Kinder der polnischen Arbeiter in der katholischen Religion zu unterrichten. Am 31. Dezember 1941 sandte ich im Namen aller deutschen Bischoefe eine Petition an das Ministerium fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten, und erbat dass es uns nicht verboten sein moege, die Kinder zwischen 8 und 12 Jahren fuer ihre erste Beichte und heilige Kommunion vorzubereiten. Diese Vorbereitung der Kinder war aufs strengste verboten.

2

Am 17. August 1941 sandte ich einen formellen Protest an das Ministerium fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten gegen den Erlass des Gouverneurs von Oberschlesien vom 24. Juni 1941 und anderer Regierungsaemter, auf Grund dessen es deutschen Geistlichen unter Androhung von Konzentrationslager-Strafen aufs allerstrengste verboten war, Polen die Seelsorge angedeihen zu lassen.

3

Eine weitere Beschwerde war, dass wir den Polen keine religioesen Drucksachen als Unterrichtsmaterial geben duerfen. Fuer den Gebrauch der polnischen Arbeiter im Erzbischoftum Breslau wurde ein Buechlein mit Gebeten und Hymnen in polnisch unter dem Titel "Droga do Nieba" (der Weg zum Himmel) herausgegeben. Das Buechlein war offiziell vom Oberkommando der deutschen Armee gestattet und es wurden 120,000 Exemplare ueber ganz Deutschland mit gutem Erfolg verteilt. Am 15. July 1945 wurde der Gebrauch und die Verteilung dieses Buechleins verboten.

4

Bezueglich des geistlichen Beistands fuer polnische Arbeiter gab das Ministerium fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten die folgende Erlaubnis am 13. Juni 1940.

a) dass an Sonn- und Festtagen die Polen waehrend der lithurgischen Dienste anwesend sein duerften, jedoch unter der Bedingung dass die Polen nur an ihrer eigenen Messe teilnehmen duerften, getrennt von den anderen Kirchenbesuchern, oder, dass im Falle einer oertlichen Notwendigkeit sie an der Gemeinde-Messe teilnehmen duerften, jedoch abgesondert in einem fuer sie reservierten Teil der Kirche;

b)dass im Notfalle Bischoefe besonders ausgewaehlte Geistliche zur Waltung ihres heiligen Amtes unter die Polen senden duerften, um an passenden Orten Gottesdienste fuer die Polen zu geeigneten Stunden abzuhalten.

H3160 - 0018

Alle diese Konzessionen wurden am 15. Juli 1941 widerrufen. Eure Eminenz sind sich bewusst, dass der Erlass des Ministeriums fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten vom 2. September 1942 das strengste Verbot fuer Polen in Bezug auf Gottesdienst enthielt, und sie nur eine Messe pro Monat besuchen durften, sowie er (der Erlass) auch die Anwendung der polnischen Sprache unterband.

5

Waehrend der vergangenen Jahre haben wir jeden Monat einen Text einer kurzen Rede in der Breslauer Curia veroeffentlicht, der als Predigt fuer die Sonntags Messe benutzt werden kann. Der Text wurde in Deutsch, Polnisch und Franzoesisch gedruckt, und wurde in vielen Bischoftuemern Deutschlands benutzt. Der Gebrauch dieser Predigten ist nun verboten, da die polnische Sprache nicht mehr benutzt werden darf.

6

Das bedauerlichste aller Unrechte fuer die einzelnen Seelen ist, dass man die muendliche Einzel-Beichte ihrer Suenden um das Sakrament der Busse zu erhalten, unterbunden hat. Um ein Beispiel zu geben, wurde ein ausgezeichneter Geistlicher meines Bischoftums zur Strafe in ein Konzentrationslager gesandt, da er waehrend der Abnahme der Beichte in seiner Kirche einen polnischen Arbeiter, der in der Reihe stand und in seinen Beichtstuhl kam, nicht abwies. Auch duerfen wir im Augenblick eine gemeinsame Beichte und Absolution nur einmal pro Monat erteilen, eine Massnahme, die weder die Seelenruhe sichert noch eine Sicherheit gibt bezueglich der Gueltigkeit der Absolution, da die notwendigen Dispositionen fehlen.

7

Wenn man alles dies in Betracht zieht, ist es nicht verwunderlich dass die religioese Verbundenheit der Polen Not leidet und ihre moralische Integritaet grossen Gefahren ausgesetzt ist. Es besteht weiterhin die Schwierigkeit legale Heiraten durchzufuehren, da deutsche Geistliche polnische Trauungen nicht schliessen duerfen. Sollte andererseits den Paaren der Rat gegeben werden, sich ohne Hinzuziehung eines Geistlichen auf Grund Canon 1098 des Codes des kanonischen Gesetzes trauen zu lassen, so besteht keine Provision fuer ihre Seelenruhe, noch die Sicherheit, dass sie in die Kirchenbuecher eingetragen werden.

Dies ist ein Grundriss der hauptsaechlichen und dringensten Misstaende.

Ich habe es niemals versaeumt formelle Proteste gegen die hier genannten unduldbaren Erlasse - an das Ministerium fuer kirchliche Angelegenheiten zu richten, und habe die Gruende angebracht, warum jeder dieser Erlasse nicht nur nicht unterstuetzbar ist, sondern sogar harmvoll und ruinierend fuer das Wohl der gesamten Nation ist. Ausser mir haben noch alle anderen Mitglieder der Hierarchie, in deren Bischoftuemern diese Erlasse auf gehaessige Art und Weise in Kraft gesetzt wurden, einzeln um Abhilfe gebeten. Und jeder dieser Faelle wurde von Seiner Exellenz Bischof Wienken, der in Berlin wohnt und von der Fulda Konferenz beauftragt wurde, mit den Ministerien zu verhandeln, persoenlich vorgetragen und wurden unsere Petitionen und Gruende unterstuetzt. Jedoch war alles vergeblich. Der Grund ist die intensive Abneigung der Partei gegen die Polen, und das Misstrauen, geboren aus der Furcht, dass durch geheime polnische Agitation zu viele Schwierigkeiten fuer den augenblicklichen Zustand entstehen wuerden. Die Polen hatten eine tief verwurzelte Hoffnung und waren voll enthusiastischer Erwartung, dass das polnische Reich aufs Neue gebildet und wieder auferstehen wuerde. Daher werden sie alle, - ohne Ausnahme - von der deutschen Regierung als Feinde des jetzigen deutschen Staates betrachtet. Alle deutsche Geistlichen, die auf Grund ihrer Pflicht und Barmherzigkeit sich von allem Unrecht fernhalten muessen und allen Christen ohne Nationalitaetsunterschied mit dem Schatz der christlichen Doktrin beistehen sollen, und die ihr Bestes tun, die Seelen aller zu retten, werden infolge ihrer

H3160 - 0019

unterschiedslosen Barmherzigkeit - obwohl sie nur zur ausschliesslichen Erreichung uebernatuerlicher Ziele ausgeuebt wird, - mit groesstem Misstrauen angesehen, als ob sie sich ungesetzlich fuer die Feinde des augenblicklichen Staates und seiner politischen Ziele einsetzten. Aus diesem Grund sind alle unsere Erklaerungen und Petitionen verdaechtig und erhalten kein Gehoer. Daher existiert dies ungluecksliche Stadium unserer Angelegenheiten, das niemand in Ordnung bringen kann.

BETREFFEND DIE KONZENTRATIONSLAGER.

Bis zu diesem Augenblick haben wir nur wenig erfahren koennen, da wir keinerlei Informationen haben, warum Einzelpersonen dorthin gesandt werden, noch welche Behandlung, Schicksal, Gesundheitszustand und Notwendigkeiten sich dort fuer sie ergeben. Menschen, die in diese Lager gebracht werden, wird striktes Schweigen unter Androhung von schwersten Strafen, bezueglich aller Dinge, die sich im Lager abspielen, auferlegt; und sie sagen aus diesem Grund nichts aus. Unsere Bischoefe haben tiefe Sympathie und Mitleid mit den Insassen der Konzentrationslager, besonders da wir ueberzeugt sind, dass ein Grossteil der dort Weilenden, unschuldig ist. Viele Geistliche meiner Diezese sind dort umgekommen, - Maenner die ich besonders hoch schaetzte in Hinblick auf ihre gerade Haltung und ihren Lebenswandel, und die dem ganzen Volke bekannt waren.

Seine Exellenz Bischof Wienken, den ich bereits frueher erwaehnte, verhandelte ununterbrochen(auf Veranlassung der regelmaessigen Bischoefe) mit den Raeten des obenerwaehnten Reichssicherheitshauptamts, wenn immer es sich um die Fuersorge eines einzelnen Internierten handelte.

Auf Wunsch der Geistlichen in Dachau, sandte ich ihnen am 25. Februar 1941 120 roemische Breviere, und am 27. Juni 1942 eine Anzahl von Messgewaendern und ein grosses Ciborium fuer die heilige Kommunion.

Am 2. Juli 1938, 4. Dezember 1940 und 3. Juli 1942 richtete ich an die Behoerden der Konzentrationslager eine dringende Berufung, dass die Heilige Messe in anderen Konzentrationslagern wie in Dachau ebenfalls gestattet werden sollte, und dass die Seelsorge hauptsaechlich den Kranken und Sterbenden zu Teil werden soll. Ich machte ebenfalls eine Petition, dass die Koerper der Toten nicht unterschiedslos verbrannt werden sollten, sondern dass es ihnen gestattet sei, auf Wunsch beerdigt zu werden. Die Petition wurde abgewiesen.

Ich begann einen statistischen Report ueber alle internierten Geistlichen in Dachau und der dort Getoeteten fuer alle Bischoftuemer Deutschlands fuer die Jahre 1940, 1941, 1942. Es war mir nicht moeglich diese Liste auf die polnischen Bischoftuemer zu erstrecken (incl. aller der waehrend des Krieges Getoeteten) da es unmoeglich war, die genauen Zahlen von Posnan-Gnesno und den anderen polnischen Bischoftuemern zu erhalten. Die Hochwuerdigen Beamten der Bischoftuemer waren nicht in der Lage zu sagen, wie viele ihrer Priester in den verschiedenen Konzentrationslagern, Dachau und anderen, gefangen gehalten wurden; wieviel sich im Exil in anderen Regionen befanden, und wieviel den Tod gefunden hatten. Wollte ich sie selbst fragen, so bezweifele ich, ob sie in der Lage waeren, eine zuverlaessige Auskunft zu geben.

Zum Schluss werde ich Bischof Wienken konsultieren, damit er in der Lage ist, gewisse Auskuenfte der von Eurer Eminenz erhobenen Fragen zu erhalten.

Jedoch erscheint es nicht zu erhoffen, dass die Regierung, oder die Partei die Auswanderung der internierten Priester aus den Konzentrationslagern gestatten wird. Auf Grund des Misstrauens, welches ich bereits erwaehnte besteht kein Zweifel, dass sie befuerchten, dass auswandernde Geistliche in fremden Laendern ausserordentlich unliebsame Berichte ueber

H3160 - 0020

die Regierung und die Partei verbreiten wuerden.

Mit aller Hochachtung und Ergebenheit,
verbleibe ich Eurer Eminenz ergebener Diener

A. Kard. Bertram Erzbischof von Breslau

* * * * * *

Ich, Harry M. Frohman, erklaere hiermit, dass ich die deutsche und die englische Sprache voellig beherrsche, und dass dies eine wahrheitsgemaesse und korrekte Uebersetzung des Dokumentes No. 3266-PS darstellt.

Harry M. Frohman,
Dolm. und Uebersetzer, OCC,
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H3160 - 0021

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